

LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES PROJECT: COHORT THREE

The purpose of requesting a Letter of Intent (LOI) is to gauge the level of interest, readiness, and commitment among the schools and districts across the state. A LOI is the **required** first step of the application process. This document is intended to provide an overview of the program, the intended outcomes, and the application/selection process so that schools and districts can fully and seriously consider this opportunity.

Technical Abstract

There is an abundance of evidence in the education community that the best way to ensure high levels of learning for all students is for schools to function as Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The Arkansas Department of Education and Solution Tree, Inc. have established a partnership to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities at Work® process within select schools. These schools will serve as the third cohort of working laboratories of the PLC at Work process, conducting action research and sharing best practices with other schools throughout the state. The Project provides intensive training and support for each school with a focus on increasing student achievement through the PLC process.

Overview of the Project

The third cohort of schools will begin in the 2019-2020 school year. Selected schools will be matched with a certified PLC at Work Associate from Solution Tree and receive intensive onsite support as they implement, deepen, and sustain the PLC process. Each school will create action plans that focus on increasing student achievement through aligned curriculum, formative assessment practices, and proven instructional strategies. The plans will be collaboratively developed based on a thorough needs assessment at the beginning of the project. Educational equity for all students will serve as a foundation for the project, so that every child receives the time and support necessary for high levels of learning.

Intended Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the project include the following:

- Create a Professional Learning Communities at Work culture within the school in order to promote continuous improvement.
- Increase levels of student achievement through teacher collaboration, a relentless focus on learning, and a results orientation.

Eligibility

All K-12 Public Schools and Open Enrollment Charter Schools within Arkansas are eligible to apply for this project. All schools intending to apply must submit a LOI. Applications will only be sent to those schools that have submitted this letter. **All LOIs must be received by 5:00 p.m. on February 1, 2019.**

Anticipated Awards

It is anticipated 8-12 schools will be selected for the third cohort of schools. The award period is for three years (July 2019 – June 2022), subject to appropriations and funding.

Process for Selecting Schools

Schools will be selected through a rigorous application and evaluation process, determined by a committee comprised of educational professionals knowledgeable of the Professional Learning Communities at Work process. Rubrics, including evaluation criteria, will be sent with the Application. At least one application will be chosen from each of five designated regions across the state (See map below). Once finalists are chosen, interviews will be conducted with the principal and superintendent of each school.

Projected Timeline

Letters of Intent Due to ADE	February 1, 2019
Application Sent	February 8, 2019
Applications Due	March 15, 2019
Evaluation Period	March 15-March 29, 2019
Superintendent and Principal Finalist Interviews	April 1-April 15, 2019
Notification of Award	April 30, 2019
Anticipated Project Start	July 2019

Process for Eligible Schools to Respond

Interested applicants should submit a Letter of Intent. The LOI should be no more than two single sided pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font. The following information should be included:

- Name of School
- Primary Point of Contact for Project
 - Include email address
- Brief Demographic Data
- Reason for Applying
- Intended Outcomes for Your School
- Describe the level of Support from District Superintendent and Building Leadership

Letters of Intent may be submitted electronically to: Tina.Smith@Arkansas.gov.

If mailing a hard copy send to:

Tina Smith
Director of Policy and Special Projects
Arkansas Department of Education
Four Capitol Mall, Room 305-A
Little Rock, AR 72201

The deadline for the Letter of Intent is February 1, 2019.

Arkansas Region Map

